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ture of the earth and planetary space. It is a new epitaph, chiselled on the monument of Bowditch.

“ These results of Fourier require the application of very profound mathematical investigations. And it may not be amiss to mention, that the late lamented Dr. Bowditch informed me, that he had followed Fourier, through all his intricate analyses of the subject, and that the reasoning was entirely conclusive.” — p. 236.

- ART. VI.—1. *Speech of Mr. H. S. LEGARÉ, of South Carolina, on the Bill imposing Additional Duties as Depositaries, in certain Cases, on Public Officers*, delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States, October, 1837. Washington : Office of “ The Madissonian.” 8vo. pp. 32.
2. *Speech of Mr. WISE, of Virginia, on the Subject of the Late Defalcations*, delivered in the House of Representatives, Dec. 21, 1838. Washington : Office of “ The Intelligencer.” 8vo. pp. 32.
3. *Speech of Mr. DUNCAN, of Ohio, in the House of Representatives, April 10, 1840, on the Bill making Appropriations for the Civil and Diplomatic Expenses of the Government, for the Year 1840*. Washington : “ Globe ” Office. 8vo. pp. 20.

THERE are few things in this age and country of reform, more urgently demanding correction than the style of our *Congressional* debates. In the American halls of legislation, it is not unnatural to expect to find eloquence of a high character. No stimulus to the power of speech could well be greater than is furnished to him, who discusses the interests of a great people, for the conviction of those whose votes are to be decisive of its policy. A perfectly unrestricted freedom of deliberation exists. The body is, or ought to be, select, both branches numbering together less than three hundred members ; most of whom, also, must needs have had abundant previous practice, as, in consequence of the electioneering usages of the greater portion of the country, its representatives must have spoken their way to their seats.

There has been, and is, much good speaking in the Congress of the United States. With the best disposition for an impartial judgment, we cannot see reason to allow, that any deliberative orations of the day take precedence of the best American specimens, in the highest attributes of the art. But waving this, there is one remarkable difference, not disclosed in the printed reports, which is perceived on the first opportunity of actual comparison between the debates of the United States' Congress and of the British Parliament. In respect to ease and propriety in the mere expression of his thoughts, the English debater is generally far inferior to the American. He makes up for this, no doubt, by a far more indispensable merit. He talks no nonsense. He speaks to the point. He has thoroughly considered the subject. His mind is full of the needful facts. His argument is an effective, business-like piece of work. But it is astonishing how men of the highest culture, used to the best society from their birth, and with a position and an experience which one would think might give them confidence, — how the Great Duke, for instance, how Earl Spencer, how Lord Melbourne, to say nothing of names of less note, — will stammer and boggle through a speech, finishing one half of their sentences improperly, and leaving a good portion of the other half not finished at all. And this is the more surprising, when one considers that the speakers in the English House of Commons are still, even since the passage of the Reform Bill, a comparatively select corps. Until lately, five or six leading men on each side were about as many as ever took part in a debate. When an ambitious young member stepped into the ring, his first essay received a respectful attention. If he succeeded, he settled his right to speak for the future. If he failed, he doomed himself to be coughed down on any subsequent attempt. The number of speakers, though larger than under the old dispensation, is still small. But, of this small number, a large portion utter their weighty thoughts, and various and exact information, with a difficulty and clumsiness, affording a striking contrast to the full, unembarrassed, self-satisfied flow of almost any honorable gentleman, who for a week on a stretch addresses posterity* on the floor of Congress.

* The versatile General Alexander Smyth, of Virginia, — now legislator, now soldier, now commentator on the *Apocalypse*, — in the course of a two

“A week,” we say ; and we scarcely exaggerate ; for their length is one of the crying sins of our orators. A day’s session of the House of Representatives, costs the country nearly five thousand dollars. What an enormity is it, that one, two, three days should be taken up even with a sensible argument, which properly treated might be compressed into half as many hours, to say nothing of the too frequent harangues, which, for the honor of the country, it would be worth twice the money to suppress. Before the Reform Bill, there were very few instances, — we believe only one or two, — of a debate in the British Parliament running into the second night. With us, they continue an indefinite time during all the early part of the session, the really important business, for which the legislature is convened, being generally pushed to the very close, and huddled up in the two or three last days and nights without debate, and very often without consideration or knowledge. Mr. Bell, of Tennessee, spoke four days in committee of the whole, on a motion to strike out an appropriation for the Portsmouth Navy Yard. Mr. Bond, of Ohio, in his speech on Retrenchment, kept possession of the morning hour appropriated to resolutions, for no less than six successive weeks. Mr. Adams held it once, if we remember right, two months ; so that, at the present rate of steam navigation, a person leaving Washington after hearing the exordium, might conveniently have made two voyages to Europe, and on his second return have found the honorable member on his legs, and been in good season for his peroration.

This, we are bound to add, — and it illustrates another fact of the same class, — was not Mr. Adams’ fault. No man speaks more concisely and to the point, when he can secure the privilege of being let alone. He is one of two members of the present Congress, whose arguments and expressions are so orderly and exact, that the Washington reporters say their words can be taken down and printed without compression or alteration. On the occasion just referred to, Mr. Adams was annoyed with all sorts of interruptions,

days’ speech upon nothing in Committee of the Whole, was called to order by Arthur Livermore, of New Hampshire, for irrelevancy of matter. “Mr. Chairman,” said Smyth, “I am not speaking for the member from New Hampshire, but to posterity.” “The gentleman,” rejoined Livermore, “is in a fair way, before he finishes, to have his audience before him.”

which the ingenuity of parliamentary tactics could suggest, — the House being so little sensible, through long use, to any inconvenience from long speeches, as often to forget the unquestionable advantage of the course of hearing an argument out at once, and then answering it, over that of keeping it on hand, week after week, by embarrassing it as it proceeds ; and the members, who, for the time being, have not the floor, exciting, by the interruptions of their own impatient loquacity, the loquacity of the member who is up.

There is generally a marked difference, in this respect of *long-windedness*, between members from different portions of the country, though the constant force of example tends to assimilate them. Not that, in our opinion, there is much sense in what has been so often and so knowingly said about the contrast between Southern frankness, fancifulness, and passion, and Northern reasonableness, costiveness, correctness, and frost. We think the less of this philosophy, when we remember that the orator, who now-a-days most amazes and overwhelms with his torrent of words and figures, — Mr. Prentiss, of Mississippi, — is of New England birth and rearing, and that all the animation of the Southern speakers of the last three Congresses, if they were to club their ardors together, would not equal that of a septuagenarian of the old Bay State. But though there is no want of imagination or enthusiasm in the northern latitudes, nor of logic or far-sightedness in the southern, still the members from different parts naturally bring to their meeting more of the habits of their respective constituencies, than is easily overcome by any influences of the new association to which they are introduced. Mr. Webster, Mr. Davis, Mr. Tillinghast, — these gentlemen, coming from the midst of an industrious, business-like, reality-loving community, in which the combination expressed in the saw, “ Much cry, and little wool,” is esteemed at once natural and undesirable, are generally terse and brief in comparison with their Southern and Western associates of like eminence. The population of the South and South-west can spare more time from action for speech, and, besides, it has taken Virginia for its model ; — Virginia, which dearly loves to talk, passionately loves to talk politics. Combining the leisure with the independence of agricultural pursuits, — the oldest of the American commonwealths, — the traditionary head of the

Southern interest, — the prescriptive head of the country, to which it gave Presidents for more than three quarters of the first forty years, — it is natural that the position of this distinguished commonwealth should at once create in its citizens an aptitude for discourse, — for political discourse, in particular, — and inspire them with the idea, that their political sayings and doings can scarcely have too great a share in the movements of the republic. The true Virginian has a grand largeness of heart ; but his very liberality, operating under a partial misconception, tends to a degree of obtrusiveness and overaction. To him, his State is the world's rudder ; the centre of this visible diurnal sphere is a point somewhere near to the door of Albemarle Court House ; the odd-looking little sentry-box on a platform, in which the taste of the House of Burgesses has thought meet to ensconce its Speaker, is the very seat on which the genius of Liberty reposes, and says,

“ Here is my throne ; let kings come bow to it.”

With his generous tastes, what shall the Virginia proprietor do with the time, of which, looking out on his solitary expanse of wheat and tobacco, he sees there is such great plenty on his hands ? Read, to be sure. And read what ? Doubtless politics and political history ; for what would become of the world without the United States ? and how could the United States get on without Virginia for a regulator ? and to him individually, with others, it belongs, or may belong, to utter the Virginian oracles. So he reads all his life long in this department, while he is without visitors ; and talks over and over with his family what he has read, in that plantation retirement where there is so little else to talk of ; and disputes about it with his neighbours when they meet, with discourse the more voluble for having been so long pent up ; and selects and repeats the available parts at the hustings, as soon and as long as he is a candidate for office ; and then takes his seat in Congress under a sense of responsibility which forbids silence, with an affluence of matter, such as it may be, which will not be restrained and cannot be exhausted, and with a practice in the use of the organ of speech which ensures, that, in its longest exercise, he will make a pleasure of a toil. He has no notion that anybody ought to be *delivered from the Greeks and Romans* ; no, nor from the Goths and Vandals either. All his remembrances of ancient

and modern lore, of classical and feudal story, are subject to be brought out on a question of renewing the upholstery of the Representatives' Chamber, or paying the Sergeant-at-Arms.

So it is with excellent Virginia ; and, with a large portion of the Union, Virginia is the pattern state, and its statesmen the pattern orators. But since in this, as in other cases, the homely maxim holds good, that "he that follows must go behind," that imitation of Virginia eloquence, which if exact, would not be irreproachable, is often exaggerated and ungraceful to an extreme degree. Many a Western member, raised to his present eminent station by the merit of energy and talent, without the advantage of early culture, feels bound to emulate or surpass in length his "eloquent friend from the Ancient Dominion" ; and with arguments less rich, and illustrations less apt and weighty, the length of speeches, which for their length alone would be vexatious, becomes oppressive and — intolerable, we would say, were it not that the notorious experience of session after session proves too certainly that they can be borne.*

By a concise and careful speaker a great deal will be said in a little time. Demosthenes could not, for his life, have made a speech on a given subject, a quarter as long as Mr. Bynum. In the old Greek's way of weaving, the stock would not hold out. Hesiod's maxim is in such cases beautifully true ; *Πλέον ἤμισυ πάντος*. A long speech may be made long by interruptions, which turn the speaker out of his self-prescribed course ; but, barring this, it must owe part of its length to impertinences. And what impertinences are our Congress speeches often made up of ! When the lucky member, among fifty who spring to their feet at once, catches Mr. Speaker's eye, what experienced person, from knowing the bill or resolution that has just been read from the chair, would hazard the remotest guess at the subject of the outpouring which is to follow ? On one occasion we heard Mr.

* The forensic eloquence of the Federal City, though that is not our theme, of course partakes of the same character. A Western advocate, already prominent in the Legislature, had begun somewhere near to the origin of things, and the first principles of society, and was working his way down through Bracton and Coke to the case in hand, in argument before the late Chief Justice Marshall. The magnificent old gentleman was seldom weary, and never impatient ; but he thought that, on this occasion, some time might be saved. "Brother H——," said he, "there are some things which a Chief Justice of the United States may be presumed to know."

Storer, of Ohio, deliver a set biography of General Harrison. One of Herodotus' recitations at the Olympic games, oddly as it would have sounded, if pronounced before the Senate of five hundred, was not more properly an historical composition. We do not remember, — how should we? — what motion was before the House ; but we remember so much as that it had no more to do with General Harrison than it had with Julius Cæsar. In such cases, it may be said, that the discourse may have connexion in itself, though it wants connexion with its text, and that, if a subject concerns the nation, there is some excuse for making an opportunity to discuss it, when no opportunity fairly occurs. But very often a member will make up a long speech of what has not only no relation to the matter in hand, but what has no interest out of his own district. His vehement utterance, and the expression of satisfaction that inspires his features, show that he feels himself to be doing something effective, while the representatives around him from other parts of the country are quite in the dark respecting the relations of what he labors with so much fervor. The truth is, that he is haranguing his constituents respecting his claim to their suffrages at the coming election ; and his argument, already in type, and now delivering at the Treasury's cost, will to-morrow morning go flying all abroad on the wings of the mail, to blast the schemes of his competitor for office in distant Alabama or Illinois. This is called, in Congressional phrase, speaking *for Bunkum*.^{*} In other cases, which the presiding officer, if there is a call to order, is in the habit of licensing, under the courteous descriptions of "a wide range of debate," "using latitude of discussion," and the like, the orator, enamoured of his own voice, and tenacious of a position, which, once surrendered, he well knows he may be long in regaining, gives the freest reins to imagination, and makes

^{*} The following account of this familiar phrase is from the "Richmond Compiler"; "A grave member of the Lower House of Congress, from the venerable State of North Carolina, and from a district which included the county of *Buncombe*, in which county he resided, whose style of speaking produced a very common effect of driving the members from the Hall, and all that, was one day addressing the House, when as usual, the coughing and sneezing commenced, and the members began leaving. He paused awhile, and assured the House that there need be no uneasiness on their part, and that for himself it mattered not how many left, for he was not speaking to the House, but to 'Bunkum.' It is now understood to mean the *constituent* body, in Congressional parlance."

the most unsparing drafts on the treasures of reflection and memory. It is melancholy to think, how many speeches are made in both houses of Congress, which would furnish examples of this vice. Let two or three suffice. They will, at the same time, illustrate some other remarks, which we have already made, or to which we shall presently proceed. We take the following from the speech of Mr. Wise, of Virginia, of which we have given the title above.

“ Mr. Wise rose to address the House on Mr. Cambreleng’s motion for a select committee to investigate the defalcation of Samuel Swartwout, late Collector at New York. Several gentlemen solicited him to defer his remarks until to-morrow. Mr. Wise declined, and said ;

“ ‘ Mr. Speaker, — After once losing the floor in the manner I did, by complying with such requests the other day, and by your decision yesterday, that petitions had precedence for thirty days over this motion, I feel very timid of Locofocoism in yielding it again. I see, Sir, gentlemen desire that this discussion should not proceed, at least, not yet. They are afraid that public sentiment will be forestalled. They are heartily sick of this subject already, and would gladly get rid of it altogether. For their sakes, then, I shall go on ; let them be patient under the operation ; if they are hungry, let them go home and get their dinner ; I shall not have concluded before their return, for, by refusing me leave to proceed yesterday, they have only given me more time to provide more materials ; they have only laid up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath. I feel better prepared, much better, in body and mind, than I was before ; and, with this bank of documents before me, I could rain forty days and forty nights upon their sins and iniquities.

“ ‘ Sir, in my rambling remarks the other day, I *said* many things which I will *prove* now. I said the proposition of the gentleman (Mr. Cambreleng) did not go far enough. Instead of inquiring only into the manner and extent of Swartwout’s defalcation, it should propose an investigation of the *official conduct of the Secretary of the Treasury, with a view to his impeachment*, if sufficient be found on which to base the articles of specification.

“ ‘ Let gentlemen understand me. I measure my terms. I speak in no spirit of bravado. I *declaim* not when I say, that if a majority of this House would do their duty without fear, favor, or affection, the Secretary of the Treasury would, before this House adjourns, be impeached. If ever a felon de-

served the hangman's knot, the Secretary of the Treasury, Levi Woodbury, deserves impeachment. That is the proposition which I will now proceed to demonstrate.

“ ‘ This is a bold declaration ; I know the weight of its responsibility ; it requires some exertion to prove it, and I must be permitted to go back a little, to take a review of the past from the beginning, and to gather, and group, and array all my exhibits and proofs. ’ ” — p. 1.

Such was the comprehensive exordium of a speech on a motion for raising a committee to attend to Mr. Swartwout. The peroration was as follows ;

“ Sir, ‘ In the piping times of peace, ’ the greatest service a representative can render, is to save the public money. I have faithfully endeavoured to discharge this duty ; to save the public money from wicked rulers, and to preserve the purity and virtue of both the people and their servants from the temptations of a splendid government and a wicked administration. If I have done nothing towards this end, it is not my fault. The task has been a hard one ; I have had to labor at the oar against wind and tide, against a most powerful and popular President and party, against *you*, Sir, your committees, and this House. But the blaze of glorification is espied. Thank God, the day-star dawns from on high. There is now hope of salvation ; an hour of retributive justice is coming ; Truth, though slow, is coming gradually along with her torches. I have been waiting for her long, but never without hope. I have had to carry my life itself in my hand, the harness of deer-skin, and cold steel and iron, has often galled my shoulders, an armed arsenal against the king's forces, — they are dangerous when there are such rich spoils ; but I have escaped unscathed, thank God ! though my slanderers, and persecutors, and revilers would have the world believe that my war upon corruption has not been bloodless.

“ I care not for these aspersions, they pass me as the idle wind. Much less have I regarded some good, honest friends, who have assisted to ‘ damn me with the faint praise ’ of doing, or trying to do, some good, notwithstanding my faults and indiscretion ! Sir, what other course could I pursue but that of fearless boldness, ay, apparent recklessness ? But this is egotism. I know who will defend me, who do back me. I have my reward, — the only reward I ever looked for, — at home, in the affections of my people ! Yes, Sir, my people. They are mine, because I am theirs, — in devotion, in sacrifice, in service ; in good report, in evil report ; theirs po-

litically, personally theirs ! And all your party, and all its power, cannot separate me from my people, or shake me in their confidence. I must myself first forfeit it, before I am ever by them distrusted, or proscribed. They will pardon my infirmities, and indulge my weaknesses, provided I remain true to them and their country. May Heaven reward them and their children's children, as they reward me ! But, Sir, I had rather have been fighting for them in the Florida swamps, with blade against tomahawk, than to have been warring, as I have, upon this almost overwhelming power of corruption. Dangers beset you in every path in this war ; dangers of life and limb, dangers to character, dangers, in fact, to your own virtue. No man can oppose himself to universal corruption here, without having all his virtues tempted and tried, as in a fiery furnace. My hope is in a majority of the next House of Commons. The Empire State has declared for the People, against the President.

“ That now is the issue ; Shall the people, or the President, prevail ? The contest is no longer about measures. The sub-treasury may be proved to be the best system which the wisdom of man could devise ; but, Sir, the President and his minions have dared to *force* it upon us, have arrogantly proclaimed, it shall be the law, ‘ notwithstanding the lamentations here or elsewhere.’ The measure has been thrice rejected ; it is again presented, and, if passed, will prove that the President is too strong for the people. In this issue, I can no longer debate its policy or expediency. Another consideration is paramount. I oppose it now, because it is an executive measure. Prove it to be the best, I would have my arm chopped off, my tongue pulled out, before I will be forced to vote for it by the will of one man. I will not have ‘ pudding itself stuffed down my throat ’ ! There was a majority of fourteen against it last winter ; now, I fear, a much smaller majority. Some have *gone over*. No wonder. The President, notwithstanding the manifestations of public sentiment, has all the odds against the people. He has one hundred thousand office-holders to do his bidding, stationed at every outpost ; spies, informers, throughout the country. He has the press. He has the public money, wherewith to pay ‘ the bounty,’ unprotected by law, in the hands of partisans, placed where he pleases, distributed as he pleases. He has the public lands. This is the great source of patronage and power.

“ Sir, how can State-rights men support this mammoth executive ? How expect a large portion of the States to be free and independent, and to stand upon their reserved rights against power consolidated in the hands of the executive of

the Federal Government ; when every new State is raised, nurtured into very being and existence, upon executive pap and patronage ? Look at every new State on your frontier, and count their executive force in the Senate ! This is the domain corruption, which buys and secures States ; the other sources of patronage, offices and money, retain men. Men and States will render the President omnipotent ! I call on all the patriotic of this land to drop currency, banks, finance, — every minor consideration and topic, and to devote themselves wholly to the great work of resisting and reducing this dagon executive, to come up to our help, to come soon, or we will be powerless to resist. May an overruling Providence prevent the reduction of our strength to a weak minority before this very session expires ! The President has but a short time to ‘ fatigue us into compliance ’ ; but, if the ‘ favorite measure ’ be passed, no tongue can tell the horrible results to this nation. It will surely reflect him to a second term ; and who will succeed him ? That is the last great question. Let me tell certain gentlemen of the South particularly, no matter what may be their hopes, and their calculations, for their man, there is one, whom I cannot call a man, who is as sure of the succession, as he surely deserves nothing but ignominy and disgrace, — that monster is Thomas H. Benton.

“ *The Speaker.* Not in order.

“ *Mr. Wise.* ‘ The man ’ of Missouri, then ; and who can bear the thought ? I hold the horrible result up to the American people as the last, worst result ; the climax of horror, of the present corrupt dynasty ! When that happens, I will follow the examples of Swartwout and Price, and take passage for England.” — pp. 31, 32.

And here are some gems from other parts of the same oration.

“ Sir, the President, in this letter, prated about the records of the Government and the public documents, as if he had read and examined them. I doubt whether he ever examined, or read to examine, any one subject thoroughly whilst he was in office. No, Sir, I venture to guess that Amos Kendall, — ‘ honest Iago,’ — whose official misconduct was most likely to be exposed, was the infamous author of this daring outrage ; he was a tool fit to be its author, of every word, and letter, and doctrine of it ; he was the President’s thinking machine, and his writing machine, ay, and his lying machine ! Sir, if General Jackson had been elected for the third term, one great good would have come of the evil ; Amos Kendall would have been worked to death ! Poor wretch, as he rode his Rosinante down Pennsylvania Avenue, he looked like death on the

pale horse ; he was chief overseer, chief reporter, amanuensis, scribe, accountant-general, man of all work ; nothing was well done without the aid of his diabolical genius. Since Jackson's 'retirement,' he has assumed to be obeyed himself, instead of being a slave. He has worked hard for his lever of mischief. God send the country may not suffer for his pains in obtaining the supremacy which he now holds." — p. 5.

"He [Watkins] was born and bred a gentleman ; dazzled by the tinsel glare of this metropolis of 'splendid misery and shabby splendor,' (as it was once, with equal force, truth, and beauty, described by that unequalled orator of Virginia, John Randolph,) of liberal mind and habits, too, he lavished some three thousand improvidently, thinking in his heart that he should be able to replace that sum and more, and 'make all straight,' and he was imprisoned for his imprudence for nearly four years, and made to bear a felon's brand ! Ah ! Sir, but he was a gentleman, he belonged to 'all the decency,' to the 'silk-stocking gentry' ; he was not one of your Locofoco defaulters, he was not *unfortunate* to the amount of millions, he was no robber on a large scale, he was not one too full-handed to be touched by the rude hands of the tipstaff, he was not a defaulter of the great democracy ; and, poor fellow, he suffered for being a gentleman ! By the by, Sir, that word reminds me of the fact, that it was during, or not until, the past summer, your party first discovered that your President was a gentleman ! The discovery was made first, I think, by Granny Ritchie. That venerable gentleman took me to task for finding some gentlemen in Petersburg, and, as a set-off, it seemed, boasted that President Van Buren, too, was actually a gentleman ! Very strange ! that a man whom they made President, the successor of the 'illustrious' in 1837, they did not find out to be a gentleman, until the summer of 1838 ! They must surely have been trying to make him out a Whig. For myself, I always knew he was, in the ordinary sense, a gentleman ; and it was mortifying for me to see, that the 'Enquirer,' by implication at least, had supposed until lately that the President of the United States could be other than a gentleman ; judging, I mean, from its boast of the sudden discovery ; but my colleague, there, [Mr. Dromgoole,] will not, however, recognise Mr. Ritchie as a genuine Locofoco editor. [Mr. Dromgoole said, "No, no, he is a Conservative."] There is a cheering consideration connected with this discovery, though by the administration press ; it is the brightest omen which has occurred for years, of Mr. Van Buren's downfall. Yes, Sir, that cry of 'gentleman' upon him by his friends will finish him ; with the party which supports him, they might as well have

cried 'mad dog.' It is a certain prognostic, that he is going down. From the hour that Father Ritchie made that fatal discovery, the man's doom was sealed. But, Sir, the gentleman defaulter, Watkins, as I was saying, met his fate; and now that he has been purified by the fires of the law, we may be permitted to do him justice, and to make him the instrument of retribution. I call him up; I invoke his wrongs, his sufferings, his injuries, his expiation, to rise in judgment against his persecutors, to condemn them. Where is he now? In a station where he is, no doubt, far happier than in his day of precarious and terror-haunted show, when he toiled as a poor slave, in one of the stalls of your document factories, called Departments. He is now an humble apothecary; and here I will say, for the benefit of all who would be honest, and who wish to be clean, that he keeps for sale the very best of 'palm soap' and chloride of lime, and other chemical compositions, to take off the spots of Locofocoism, and to cleanse from all corruption! I recommend to certain sub-treasury gentlemen to go and buy; but what if they be once washed white as snow, they will, like the hog, return to their wallowing in the mire." — pp. 7, 8.

And here is more from the same gentleman's "Speech on the Causes of the Loss of the Fortification Bill of the last Session, delivered in the House of Representatives, January 22, 1836."

"Sir, my distinguished friend from South Carolina (Mr. Thompson) told the gentleman from New York (Mr. Cambreleng) the other day, that 'it is the fashion of "the party" not to shrink from responsibility.' My honorable friend has convinced me, that he is a most excellent judge of men and things, but he was mistaken that time. No, Sir; General Jackson, in accordance with his high-toned independence of mind and action, assumes responsibility; but 'the party' shrinks, and skulks, and dodges, in fear and trembling. When Jupiter shakes the empyrean heights, all the gods tremble! When Jackson frowns and stamps his foot, rises in his majesty, and says, 'I take the responsibility!' all the sycophants of 'the party' quake with fear. Witness the deposite question. When the President went forth in doubtful contest against the bank, there was a 'little man,' who trembled from his hair to his heels, — [here some one said he had no hair,] — right, Sir, his head is bald; from the crown, then, of his head to the sole of his foot. His knees smote together with fright during the battle; but, the moment the victory was achieved, out sprang the Lilliputian from behind the 'Old Hero,' and strutted, hec-

toring over the dead body of the monster monopoly. So it was, Sir, with that very three millions amendment. I have no doubt the President was independent and honest enough to have recommended it boldly ; but 'the party' leaders kept the recommendation secret. And when the sum was reduced so low as to disappoint the 'Old Hero,' and to rouse his wrath to veto the bill, 'the party' were manœuvring, and dodging, and whispering, and cutting, and shuffling through the Capitol, and sending billets to change the responsibility of the failure of the 'fortification bill' from the President to the Senate ! That is the secret. Sir, when it is found that any measure will succeed and aggrandize the 'little man,' then 'the party' will take the responsibility ; not before. So it was this very session, with this same Secretary of our Navy. If there had been no responsibility, no popularity to risk in recommending six millions for the increase of the Navy, the service would not now be suffering for appropriations. But, Mr. Speaker, there is a certain class of men, who, put them where you will, in any situation in life, will *piddle*, — I mean old bachelors ! I never will henceforth support any man for the presidency, who will appoint a bachelor to any office of honor or profit, and especially, of responsibility. An old bachelor, Sir, is a 'withered fig tree' — he is a '*vis inertie*' ! Old bachelors are too near akin to old maids !" — p. 31.

With such wretched babble does the gravity of an American Congress submit to be affronted. Mr. Wise has a reputation for abilities. He cannot expect much credit for them from such as know him only from reports of his oratorical exhibitions, till he has put his mind anew in training. Scarcely any thing can be worse, than the taste of all his harangues which we have seen. If he have talents, so much the worse for the effect of his style of speaking, as an example. Without the redeeming qualities of John Randolph, who was a scholar, and who, though he rambled insufferably in his argument, was terse and compact in single sentences, Mr. Wise's style is almost a caricature of the worst traits of that eccentric orator. Randolph of Roanoke was undoubtedly a person of brilliant parts, but no one can imitate him without ruin to his mind. Especially was it a dark day for American eloquence, when, because he was afflicted with a constitutional virulence of temper, abusive language, under the names of "withering sarcasm" and the like, came to be regarded as a high achievement of the art.

“ Scarcely any thing,” we said, can be worse than the taste of Mr. Wise’s harangues. The *ne plus ultra* of untastefulness, however, we are forbidden to account them. What bad habits of speech make Mr. Wise’s orations, with abilities (so say his coadjutors), the same, and yet worse, through similar habits, Mr. Duncan’s speeches become, without them. Will posterity, — unless some fate should forbid the intervening generations to come to their senses, or unless republics meantime should become a scoff and by-word through the earth, — believe that such matter as this was vented, in the nineteenth century, in a deliberative assembly of the first republic in the world? On the 10th of April of the present year, “ the Bill making Appropriation for the Civil and Diplomatic Expenses of the Government for the year 1840,” being under consideration, the member from Ohio delivered himself as follows ;

“ Sir, I delight in the very name of a log cabin. There is no name in the English vocabulary that dwells upon my lips with so much delight as log cabin. It brings fresh to my recollection scenes of youthful pleasures, which I have never since, nor ever will again enjoy. Many and oft is the time that I thought a day a month, in anxious watch for the setting sun, which was the token for the rally to the frolic of the log cabin, where I met the comrades of my youth in dance, play, and song. In the times of which I am speaking, log cabins were what the term means, — a house made of round logs, one story high, of dimensions suited to the size or number of the family who were to inhabit it, and sometimes with reference to an *increase*, a puncheon floor, a lin bark loft, and a clapboard roof. The industry of the matron and her daughters was displayed by the thick folds of linsey frocks, pantaloons, and hunting shirts, which behung its walls. Its loft was underhung with strings of dried pumpkins, and its capacity heated and lighted with a large wood fire from its capacious chimney. So much for the description. Now for the frolic. The frolic consisted in dancing, playing, and singing love-and-murder songs, eating johnny-cake and pumpkin-pies, and drinking new whiskey and brown sugar out of a gourd. Our dancing in my youthful day, and in my neighbourhood, was done to the performance of an old Irishman with one leg, with the heel of which he beat time, a fiddle with three strings, to the air of

‘ Barney, let the girls alone,
Barney, let the girls alone,
Barney, let the girls alone,

And let them quiet be.
Judy, put the kettle on,
Judy, put the kettle on,
Judy, put the kettle on,
And we'll all take tea ;

for, if I recollect right, I think our fiddler played but one tune.

“ But let me tell you, Sir, our girls were not to be sneezed at. They presented a form in beauty, that marked the developments of nature, when unrestrained by corsets, and the withering dissipation of fashionable and high life; and their guileless hearts looked through a countenance that demanded confidence in their innocence and unsullied virtue. But, oh ! their forms ! When you plied your arm to their waists, in the giddy waltz, with the twenty-five yards of warm linsey, in which they were comfortably enwrapped, you had an armful of health and firmness. These constituted my pleasures in the days of log cabins, and this is a description of log cabins, which, so far as it goes, will be recognised by those who have been round in the western country. But, Sir, the days of log cabins have passed away in the older settlements of the West, and with them, most of the log cabins; and, with the log cabins, many of the amusements common to such tenements. All the older pioneers of the West and their descendants, who have observed that kind of prudence, industry, and economy, which constitute the character of the good citizen, and entitle him to the confidence of honest men, have possessed themselves of comfortable and commodious brick and frame houses, large barns, and well improved farms, checkered with grain fields of every color, and mantled with horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs, and with hard cash for a rainy day, and some to lend a friend in need.”

Again ;

“ In relation to the conscience-keeping committee, I must say something. Of David Gwynne, I know nothing personally; I am unacquainted with him. I presume he is a clever fellow, and a respectable citizen, as all my constituents are. I take it for granted, that he is opposed to the administration and the democratic party and principles, but not the less respectable for that. But of J. C. Wright, and O. M. Spencer, I know something. I know them to be attorneys at law, of high standing. I know them, as private citizens, to be of the most respectable order ; and I will take this occasion to invite all who hear me, and all who may read me, to call on J. C. Wright, and O. M. Spencer, should they have any business in the way of their profession. No two men, in the State in which they

live, will discharge their duty with more fidelity or more ability. But I know another thing. The democracy will find themselves vetoed, if they make these gentlemen the conservatives of their political rights. The log cabin, and its wool-hat inmates, will find themselves in the *vocative*, if their political rights are thrown upon the care and protection of these gentlemen. A Persian frog could not swim in all the hard cider they ever drank. These gentlemen may have seen a log cabin in their travels; so they may have seen a plough; but I doubt if either of them knows to which end of it a pair of horses should be hitched, or from which side of the land the furrow should be thrown.

“These gentlemen are not Democrats. J. C. Wright will feel secretly flattered when he learns that I pronounce him a high-toned Federalist, from the first foundation of the world; and if his colleague is not of quite so blue a steep, it is because he has not been in the dye so long. Knowing, as I do, it was intended by the Federalists, that the democracy were to be gulled by this confidential, conscience-keeping committee trick, I think it was a manifestation of diplomatic stupidity, that I have never seen excelled in political manœuvring. It was cassiowary stupidity. I think it is the cassiowary bird, that rests the security of its body in the concealment of its head. The politics of this committee are too well known. If General Jackson, in his proudest and most popular days, were to have put himself in the keeping of these men, it would have blown him sky high with the democracy, far and wide as they are known. If the friends of General Harrison had constituted Uncle Jake Felter, Old Stephen Wood, and Jim Goodloe, the committee of conscience-keepers to General Harrison, the democracy would have understood something of the principles and rules of action; but, as it is, they will stand off.”

And, in the conclusion of the same speech;

“The question now is, General Harrison, a National Bank, a splendid government, poor people, a shinplaster currency, and a privileged order, against Martin Van Buren, a sound currency, an Independent Treasury, (independent of the banks,) rigid economy, a poor government, a rich people, and equal rights. Which side do you take, Sir? and, as I cannot answer that question, I will tell you which side I take; I go for Kinderhook, and the Independent Treasury; I go with the hard-handed industry; I go with those who depend upon their own resources for their living; the farmer and the mechanic, all of which constitute the democracy of this country, and of every other. Yes, Sir, I go with them against General Har-

ri-son, a National Bank, and the modern Whig party, who are made up of

‘ Coxcombs and dandies, and loafers and nibblers ;
Shavers and blacklegs, and pedlars and scribblers ;
Bankers and brokers, and cunning buffoons ;
Thieves that steal millions, and thieves that steal spoons ;
Rascals in ruffles, and rascals in rags ;
Beggars in coaches, and beggars on nags ;
Quackers and doctors, with scalpels and squills ;
Pettifoggers and lawyers, with green bags and bills ;
Shylocks unfeeling, and dealers in stocks ;
Some dashing fine ladies, in splendid silk frocks.
Such is the crew that for Harrison bellows,
Always excepting some very fine fellows.’

“ Do you desire to know the feelings of the western people in relation to Harrison, Jackson, Johnson, and their relative services? I can tell you. If a western man is asked his opinion of General Harrison, his answer will be, nineteen times out of twenty, that General Harrison is a very good man, and was a tolerable general. He has done his country some service, and that perhaps he discharged his official duties, in the last war, about as well as could be expected, all circumstances considered. This, Sir, I repeat, will be the general answer. In some instances, a higher opinion will be expressed, — in some instances, a lower one. My colleagues on this floor, Whigs and Democrats, will bear me out in what I say; but when you hear Jackson and Johnson named, they are named in praise and song, in affection and pride. Yes, Sir, in praise and song. Were you ever at a corn-shucking in the West? If you were, you never left it without hearing the wool-hat and linsey-hunting-shirt boys sing —

‘ Mary Rogers are a case,
And so are Sally Thompson,
General Jackson are a horse,
And so are Colonel Johnson.’

“ I see, Sir, in some of the western Whig papers, the name ‘ Harrison Democrats.’ This is a new name under the sun. Well, Sir, as the world grows older, names will increase. New names will run *pari passu* with the world’s age, and with the cunning and trickery of Federalism. ‘ Harrison Democrats’ in the West, are like the Frenchman’s flea; when you attempt to put your finger on them, they are not there. ‘ Harrison Democrats’ may be put in the list with mermaids, sea-serpents, and unicorns. They are names in fancy, fiction, and poetry. Sir, if you can catch a ‘ Harrison Democrat,’ take him to Ohio, and exhibit him. I would advise you, also, to accompany the exhibition with a Whig buffoon, that can jump

‘Jim Crow’ to the music of the psaltery, tambourine, and the sackbut. You will clear more hard cash in one day, than you will by playing Congressman a month.

“In conclusion, let me say, the Democracy understand and appreciate their principles,” &c.

And this was not only said, but printed, and not only printed, but praised. The commentary of the “Globe” newspaper, when it published the speech, would be amusing for its bold, yet not unwary, selection of phrase, were it not deplorable as a sign of the times.

“There is a fund of accurate and interesting information in the speech now published; and every topic touched is handled in a strong and masterly way. It is not a speech accommodated to rhetoricians’ rules, but it will be found well suited to the strong-minded, true-hearted, well-affected husbandmen of the West. This speech shows that its author understands the character of his countrymen well. Whoever reads this speech of Mr. Duncan carefully, will, in observing the various modes in which he would operate on those whom he addresses, learn the traits which distinguish the people of the West. Strong sense, strong feeling, generous sentiments, make up the stamina; broad humor, careless gayety, and hardy dispositions, with some little coarseness, characterize their manners. Mr. Duncan’s speech will be found in keeping with all these characteristics.”

“Save me from my friends,” — from such friends, at least, — may the traduced people of the West well say. The same “Globe” pronounces of this speech, “It will be found, we think, the most *taking* of all Mr. Duncan’s speeches in Congress.” Perhaps so; and yet a question might arise between it and the oration of January 9th, of this year, “on the Subject of the New Jersey Election for Members of the Twenty-sixth Congress.” Let the reader judge.

“As the floods rush from the mountains of Ethiopia, to the overflowing of the Nile, and to the enriching of the valleys and plains of Egypt, so has been the torrent of public sentiment and approbation through the medium of the ballot box, in favor of the leading measures of this administration, and the glorious and hallowed cause of democracy and the people. Sir, with the revolutionary blood and patriotism of our ancestors, backed by the thundering voice of approbation by millions of freemen, are the democracy to be awed or intimidated by the threats or

frowns of a conquered and dying party, in their last spasmodic agonies? No, Sir ; its effect is but to produce the sneer of contempt and derision. As it is common here for gentlemen Whigs to give their young friends (new Whig members) advice, so I will volunteer some advice to my young friends; and that is, to treat with contempt and scorn all the blasting, blowing, blustering, and bullying displays they may see here or elsewhere; though the fiercest Federal lions be turned into this hall, and though their ‘ shaggy tails be erect, and their jaws bedaubed with human blood,’ they really have no terrors; the people have extracted their teeth; they can do nothing but shake their manes, and growl; approach them, lay your hand upon them, they are tame; they are like Daniel’s lions ; the hand of God rested on them; the hand of the freemen of this country rest upon the Federal lions and bullies of this day. When I first entered this hall, I entered it with some trepidation, — such is the Whig system of puffing, by the lean, lank dogs, in the character of penniless letter-writers, who beset this Capitol by throngs, and whose hungry yelp is never out of your hearing. I expected to see men gigantic in body and intellect; such is the effect puffing has upon the mind of objects at a distance ; but, when I came to mingle with them, I found few of them whose bodily altitude exceeded that of my own ; and when I surveyed them, I saw nothing in them, mentally or physically, to be feared; I found them just such creatures as surrounded me at home, every day; I saw nothing here at which a well corn-and-pork-fed western Buckeye would not douse his wool hat, throw off his linsey hunting-shirt, roll up his sleeves, and ‘ walk right into.’

* * * * *

“ Virtue, patriotism, and good order are all to be sacrificed at the shrine of Federal ambition in this great contest. The man has been selected, around whose standard Antimasonry, Abolitionism, National Republicanism, Federalism, and every other *ism* under the sun except Democraticism, may rally. Open fight, secret ambushade, fair play and foul play, and every other mode of warfare known to the nations of the earth, civilized and savage, is to be adopted and used in this war. All missiles and weapons, common and uncommon, broad-swords, narrow swords, long swords, short swords, straight swords, and crooked swords, are to be used in fighting under this ring-streaked and speckled banner. Falsehood, fraud, and corruption will be in market for the highest bidder. Every venal Federal sheet will teem with foul slander, base detraction, and unblushing falsehood, and the tool of faction who can lie most, will receive the highest price for his occupation. Yes, Sir, the

zeal and Christian patriotism which were exhibited on the plains of Palestine, in defence of the Holy Land, were nothing to compare to the zeal which will be displayed in the conduct of this war upon the simple institutions of freedom. The untiring efforts of the monk Peter to rally the Christian nations in defence of the holy cause will sink into insignificance, when compared with the efforts which will be used by the Federal demagogues to rally the mercenary factions to this war against the common cause of democracy. But, to use a common Dutch maxim, it will be all '*Nix cume rous*,' or it will be applicable to a more classic maxim, '*Montes parturiunt, et ridiculus nascitur mus*.'

"Yes, Sir, a convention of the contending factions of this Union, opposed to the cause and principles of democracy and equal rights, has been held at Harrisburg; and the farmer of Tippecanoe has been nominated for the presidency! And the result of that convention will be about as it was in 1836, when, for the purposes of sectional division, General Harrison, Judge White, and Daniel Webster, were put upon the track. But they were all distanced; so it will be in 1840. Old Tecumseh and Kinderhook will distance Tippecanoe and the man of the Old Dominion, the first heat. If I were capable of giving General Harrison and his friends advice, it would be to just put their entrance money in their pockets, and leave the field; and if they have forfeitures up, let them go; that will be the saving game.

"But, Sir, perhaps these productions may be considered impious, for I see, in the reported proceeding, that the Rev. Mr. Sprecker pronounced a benediction upon the convention. Now I am going to animadvert a little upon that benediction, and let no man impugn my motives, or attach irreverence to me; for, if I have one feeling of grateful recollection for a reverend father and pious mother, both of whom now inhabit the narrow house, it is the recollection of the religious and pious precepts and principles which they taught me in sincere piety from my youth to manhood; and, although shamefully loose in their practice, yet, when I forget them, or fail in filial gratitude to those who taught them, may God forget me. If there is one book on earth that I reverence, it is the sacred word from which I am about to recite a few passages from recollection. If there is any one of the great causes which operate more than another to the perpetuity of our government, the stability of our religious and civil institutions, the peace of man here and a heavenly and glorious immortality hereafter, I believe it to be the glorious cause of Christianity. The Rev. Mr. Sprecker may be a righteous man, — I hope he is; and according to the weight and authority here given to '*primâ facie* evidence,' I am bound

to believe so, for he presents that evidence in his title; and we are told in holy writ, that 'the prayers of the righteous avail much.' But, if I do not much mistake the import or meaning of that biblical maxim, it is of importance to the success of even the prayers of the righteous man, that the object of his prayer should be worthy of Divine approbation. Holy writ furnishes us with many consoling evidences of the powerful and miraculous effects of prayer, when made at the throne of Divine mercy; evidences which show not only the duty and importance of prayer, but also the power, mercy, and goodness of Him, at whose throne every knee is bound to bend.

"The Almighty heard the prayer of Abraham, and healed Abimelech, his wife, and his maid-servants, of the barrenness with which he himself had cursed them, in consequence of Sarah, Abraham's wife. The Jews under Moses complained. The anger of the Almighty was kindled, and he sent consuming fire into every part of their camp. Moses prayed for them, he was heard, and the hand of Divine vengeance was stopped, and the fire quenched. The Jews were visited with fiery serpents, on account of their sins. The serpents bit many of them, and they died. The people came to Moses and confessed their sins, and asked him to pray for them that the Almighty would take away the serpents. Moses prayed for them; his prayer was heard, — and the Almighty directed him to prepare a serpent of brass, resembling in appearance the fiery serpents, and to lift it upon a pole. He did so; and, if any man thereafter was bitten by a serpent, he looked upon the provided remedy and lived.

"While Moses was in the mount, receiving the tables of the law, the people, with the assistance of Aaron, prepared a golden calf. When Moses returned, he found them engaged in idolatry; he threw down the tables. The anger of the Almighty was kindled, and burned against Aaron and the people; Moses fell down and prayed for Aaron and the people for forty days and forty nights; and such was the effect of his prayers, that, instead of the Almighty blotting out their names from under heaven, as he threatened, he hearkened unto Moses and spared them.

"Again; the Shunamite's son fell sick and died. The afflicted and pious mother laid him in the prophet Elisha's bed, in a little room which she had prepared for him; she went for the prophet. He sent his servant, who laid Elisha's rod upon the face of the child, and he awoke not. But when the prophet shut the door and prayed, and lay upon the child, he sneezed seven times, opened his eyes, and he delivered the child alive to his mother.

“In the days of the prophet Baal, there was a drought for three years and six months. The fountains were dried, and the rivers were drank up, and famine and desolation dwelt upon the land. Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, and prayed for rain. A little cloud instantly arose out of the sea, like a man’s hand, and soon the heaven was black with clouds, and there was a great rain.

“Job prayed for his friends, and such was the effect, that the Almighty turned his captivity, and blessed his latter end more than his beginning.

“When Hezekiah prayed in his sickness, and turned his face to the wall and wept, the Almighty heard his prayer, and added fifteen years to his life.

“Here, Sir, we have evidence of the highest character of the omnipotent effects of prayer. But it must be remembered, that the prayers here presented were not only the prayers of righteous persons, but the objects prayed for were worthy of and met Divine approbation. It is not only necessary, that those who would be heard in prayer and answered, should not regard iniquity in their hearts, but the subjects of their benediction should be in favor with the Almighty, and their objects and pursuits in conformity with the cause of justice, right, and his Divine will. Was such the case with the Harrisburg convention? Sir, the men that they are endeavouring to place in office, and the principles they are endeavouring to establish, are at war with the spirit of our Constitution, human liberty, the duration of our free institutions, and the principles which we have undoubted reason to believe are in favor with Him who sways and controls the destinies of nations, from the fact, that he led the patriots of the Revolution to battle and to victory. He withheld ‘the battle from the strong and the race from the swift.’ The light of His wisdom, and the strength of His power, have since defended our institutions from the hand of violence from abroad, and the corruption of factionists at home. Then, Sir, I undertake to predict that the prayer of the Rev. Mr. Sprecker, however righteous he may be, will fall to the ground unanswered, — the objects of the convention being unfavorable to the Divine will and his favored people.

“But, Sir, there are some other difficulties that present themselves to the success of the assembled factions and the election of the nominee of the Harrisburg convention. Is it supposed, that Mr. Clay will quietly submit to the indignity offered him, and the neglect with which he has been treated? No, Sir; disappointed ambition is not so easily calmed. He has been a distinguished leader of a great party for many years. He has worn a life nearly out in its cause; and, although I

think he knew too much of the character of the American Democracy to believe, for a moment, that he ever could be President of these United States, still it was his pride to live at the head of his party, and it was his hope, it would be his glory, to die at the head of his party. Of this hope, the only reward for his long and toilsome services, his party have deprived him. Now that he is worn down, he is turned upon the commons to shift for himself, as the Romans used to turn their worn-out slaves upon an island in the Tiber. Think you, Sir, he will bear this treatment with impunity? No, Sir; prudence may at first induce him to bear the neglect and ingratitude with apparent forbearance. He may smother his wrath for a time, but, Sir, he will rave like the disappointed political lunatic; he will growl like the hungry hyena; he will bellow like the hunted buffalo; he will roar like the lanced lion; he will do more; he will disband his troops; his sentinels scattered over the Union, who have watched with fidelity on the towers, ready to do any thing at his bidding, will throw down their arms, and take their banners from the 'outer wall,' and will deny obedience to their new commander. Murmurs, seditions, and tumults will be heard throughout the camp among his troops. We have already heard some whimpering, and seen some evidence of disaffection here. I hold in my hand a paper which contains a Whig dialogue, that speaks the voice of thousands. It is short, and I will read it;

" ' Good morning, Sir.' "

" ' Good morning to you, Sir.' "

" ' Have you heard from the Harrisburg Convention? ' "

" ' No.' "

" ' General Harrison is nominated.' "

" ' You don't say so.' "

" ' Yes I do! ' "

" ' Oh!! ' "

" Another:

" ' Good morning, Sir.' "

" ' Good morning, Sir.' "

" ' Well, the Harrisburg Convention have shot their granny.' "

" ' No, they hav'n't, — I wish they had.' "

" Yes, Sir, disappointment, confusion, and dismay, brood in the hearts, dwell upon the tongues, and perch upon the countenances of the Clay ranks, attempt to conceal it as they may.

" But to the New Jersey election. But, before I go into that investigation, permit me to say a word in relation to party and party feelings, and their effects. No government, since the civil organization of society, or the establishment of political institutions, has ever been without parties "

Which last proposition, the eloquent member, having satisfactorily disposed of General Harrison's prospect, and particularly of Mr. Sprecker's prayer, takes a new start, and goes on to illustrate.

Story-telling is a favorite and freely indulged form of illustration; and, this being so, what a consumption of time it threatens, little needs be told. The following is part of a speech, reported in the "*National Intelligencer*." In the copy in our hands, the orator's name happens to be defaced, and we do not care to take the trouble to turn to a file to ascertain it. It is no matter.

"The conduct of the late and present administrations in respect to Watkins, and the host of defaulters who have subsequently disgraced the country, reminds me of an occurrence in the far West. I will tell the story, but conceal the names of the parties. Pity shields them from presentation to public scorn. An old man who was perpetually extolling his own virtues, and decrying those of other people, and who was above all 'concealment,' according to his repeated avowals, was passing, on his way home, after running down the noblest buck in the forest, by a little cornfield of a neighbour, remotely situated from the dwelling-house. His son and his dogs were along, much fatigued by the recent chase. The old man discovered in the field, a single hog, — a runt, — engaged in breaking down the stalks and eating the corn. He immediately swore 'by the Eternal,' that he never could witness such a sight without feeling the strongest indignation against the guilty brute, and he instantly ordered his son to set the dogs on, declaring at the moment, that, if they tore him to pieces, it would be a good thing, inasmuch as by such means the neighbourhood might get clear of a bad breed of hogs. The boy obeyed, and the dogs reluctantly engaged in the less noble work, and, being the more furious and savage in consequence of fatigue, mangled the animal until his life was in danger. The youth, not wholly destitute of compassion even towards a hog, at length seized and threw him over the fence, and called off the dogs. The old man said it was useless to go round the fence to stop the holes, as he was certain the lesson would effectually teach the hog never to enter there again. So they went on home without repairing the fence, taking care, however, to pass by the owner of the field, to let him know how kind and neighbourly they had been in turning the hog out. Not long afterwards, the old man, his son, and the dogs, were going by the same field, and in it, instead of one, they discovered a

large gang of hogs, of all sizes, variously engaged. Some were breaking down the stalks, and cracking the corn with voracious appetites; some, apparently surfeited, were moping at the heels of those stimulated by hunger; and a goodly number had husks and fodder in their mouths; some frisking, and others deliberately marching to the panels of the fence, there to make themselves pleasant beds with the 'spoils.' As the old man saw what was going on at a distance, he said to his son, 'Now, my boy, our dogs shall have sport.' Indeed, the prospect of a general uproar, some fighting, and the comminglement of shouting, yelping, and squalling, in a neighbour's cornfield, was a scene by no means disagreeable to the old man's taste. He, therefore, mounted the fence with alacrity, intending to post himself and witness the feats of his son and the dogs, while 'sitting on a rail.' But he no sooner straddled the rider, than his aspect suddenly changed. He turned to his son, climbing up behind him, and said, 'Why, these are *my* hogs!' The boy gazed in silence a moment, and then with an arch look replied, 'As I live, 't is true! but I reckon, though, I must dog them a little.' The old man took a 'sober second thought,' and, after a minute's gaze, he said, 'Perhaps, my son, it would have been better for the owner of the corn, if we had stopped the holes the other day. We broke down a good deal of corn, and did mischief in getting out a single runt with dogs, and we shall not leave a stalk standing, if we serve all my gang in that way. I know, too, your mammy will not like it; for I have often heard her say that she could not bear to make souse out of hog's ears that had been torn by dogs. I will, therefore, take the dogs off, and leave you to tole or drive the hogs out as peaceably as you can.' The boy ventured to ask, 'What will the owner of the corn think, if he finds out, that we do not treat *our* hogs like those of other people?' The old man put his forefinger upon his lip, gave his son a significant look, and departed with the dogs in silence. But, unfortunately for his reputation, he had not more than got out of sight of the field, when he met the owner on his way to it. Their conversation was very brief, as the old man said he was in a hurry. His son was found in the field, toling and coaxing the hogs to a gap. The circumstances were so plain, that the owner of the corn ever after told the story I have related, and no one doubted its truth."

We have given specimens of the style of oratory of Mr. Duncan, and of Mr. Wise. That of Mr. Legaré, of South Carolina, the title of one of whose speeches is also placed at the head of these remarks, has entirely different characteris-

tics. His speeches invariably afford favorable specimens of the best manner to be observed in the halls of the American Congress. We have nothing now to say of his plans, opinions, and reasonings, which, in our judgment, are not always sound. But his information is always affluent ; his address is always dignified and gentleman-like ; ample illustrations, supplied by the observations of genius, the reading of diligent years, the experience of life, office, and society, are ready at his command. His fluency is extraordinary ; but not more so than his taste is cultivated. The all-knowing ex-President excepted, he is probably the best scholar whose voice has been lately heard in either house of Congress. A few such examples, (alas, that his is withdrawn !) could not fail to have some effect in recommending a better manner. The sculptors of the West detect their deficiencies while they discover their genius, and they betake themselves to Thorwaldsen and Greenough, to learn how to work up the good material within them. The great art of speech does not come by inspiration, any more than the manipulations of the statuary. *Le borgne est roi parmi les aveugles* ; but when a man gets the sight of one eye, if he is wise, he will desire that of two.

But *revenons à nos moutons*. That elegance of classical allusion, which, introduced without pretension, and capable of insinuating an argument in the most cogent form, sometimes charms so much in the works of orators like Mr. Legaré, is not sure of being favorably received by one class of our legislators, while, by another, it is occasionally ventured on without success. An accomplished member having not long ago concluded his speech with an apt line from a Latin poet, a political opponent from the banks of the Mohawk, who followed him in the debate, began his with reciting a short sentence in low Dutch, to the great entertainment and conviction at once of those of his inclining, — they being persuaded, of course, that it was as suitable for an accomplished statesman to be versed in the latter literature as in the former. On the other hand, this kind of embellishment is sometimes rashly affected, as when, kindled by the sentimental excitement of eulogy, an honorable member from Georgia is represented, in the report of his recent speech, to have extolled the late Mr. Crawford as follows ;

“This is a name, Sir, which I delight to honor. I revere the memory of that transcendently great man, — great in mind and in integrity. ‘*Magnum vir et venerabile nomen.*’ I thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Thompson) for the deserved tribute which he was pleased to bestow upon Mr. Crawford. It is even true, as he said, that, take him for all in all, he has had no superior since Washington died.”

Bad Latin, of course, even if it be not quite like this specimen, is much worse than none ; and good Latin may very well be spared, though the culture which acquaintance with good Latin gives, is a thing well worth having, for those who undertake to move the mind. But to ask for good, wholesome English, is no unfair demand ; and it is a thing not always to be had for the asking, in those upper regions of sway. Different members have their individual sins in this respect, and we shall not undertake to compile a list of *errata* for their harangues. On the other hand, some vicious phrases are epidemic at Washington. We do not know, for instance, that such a barbarism as “*on yesterday*” has any other than Congressional currency. The vile Scotticism of *will* for *shall*, scattered over the debates, as, “I hope I *will* not be considered out of order,” must often puzzle a foreign reader, like the unwittingly suicidal Frenchman’s, “I *will* drown, and nobody *shall* help me ;” it does not, however, belong particularly to the Congressional, but to the Southern and Western idiom.

Egotism in debate is another fault which we might take occasion to animadvert upon. Examples of it occur in the extracts given above. Some of our principal statesmen are faulty in this respect. Canning set them a fascinating and mischievous example when he said, “I called an empire into existence in America.” “I am doing,” “I did,” “I shall do,” or “I might, could, would, or should do,” through all the tenses, simple and compound, of the potential mood, make a very sorry figure in Mr. Calhoun’s speeches. Nor in this matter, we grieve to say, is Mr. Webster altogether without reproach, though his taste, like his genius, is generally excellent. “*Solitary* and *alone*, I set this ball in motion,” said Mr. Benton, so full of the triumphant sentiment, that nothing short of a pleonasm would content his self-complacency. The most solemn form of egotism, however, is, when the orator spends the House’s time and the peo-

ple's money in doing what he circumspectly calls *defining his position*. This defining of one's position, we take to be originally a Virginian fancy. We read of it often in the "Richmond Enquirer," as the amount of one or another member's unanswerable speech of a day or two in the legislature of that ancient commonwealth. There is another way in which the speakers contrive to treat one another to "large discourse, looking before and after," on their own affairs; — it is by complaining that they have been misrepresented and injured by some audacious minion, — paragraphist, or reporter, — of the "Intelligencer," "Madisonian," or "Globe" newspaper; — and this move, for as modest as it seems (since speech on such occasions is only by permission), is really one of the most effective that can be made, so difficult is it for the House to refuse a request for an opportunity of self-vindication, or to shut the mouth which once has got liberty of opening itself for that purpose.

But we pass to a vice, from which not only the credit, but in all respects the interests, of the country, suffer far more seriously, than from all those yet mentioned put together. There is often, it must be said, shocking ill-temper and ill-manners in the Congressional debates. Generally the highest men keep themselves within bounds in this respect; though certainly such a scene as the following was far from agreeable to the by-standers.

"At the conclusion of his remarks, in which he made some severe and pointed allusions to the recent speech and course of Mr. Calhoun, the latter arose, and, addressing the Chair, said, that whether from a personal or other motive, he knew not, but the Senator from Kentucky had misrepresented his speech of the other day, from beginning to end.

"Mr. Clay intimated that he had been speaking to the Senate, and not to Mr. Calhoun. Whereon the latter said, that at his leisure he would reply to the Senator in the way he thought him deserving, and when said Senator might take such remarks either personally or otherwise, just as he might think best."

So go matters, or so they are liable to go, in that august body, the Senate of the United States. Shift the scene to the Lower House, on the 21st day of February, 1839, and we have the following edifying proceedings.

“Mr. Meniffee, of Kentucky, said that Mr. Duncan was a cowardly braggadocio, who wished to have the reputation of being what is called ‘a man of honor,’ and responsible in the meaning of the ‘code of the duellist’; and on this point he spoke with the most perfect directness. He emphatically declared, that, throughout the whole progress of this business, from first to last, that member had not taken a step, which did not show his entire destitution of the principles that govern men of honor and courage, and that are recognised by the code to which he had avowed himself amenable for his conduct. Among the proofs he dwelt upon was the fact, that the publication was not made, until the law giving him license had been passed.

“Mr. Duncan here called out, that the matter was ready two weeks before.

“*Mr. Meniffee.* ‘Ready two weeks before,’ but never saw the light until the anti-duelling bill was passed. The member, said he, stands estopped, disfranchised, self-immolated, with respect to any claim from being numbered among men of honor. He had given a signal example of seeking redress, by coolly and deliberately sitting down to concoct, by way of answer, a tissue of abuse which might be more violent than any thing that had been urged against him.

“Mr. Duncan rose and interrupted Mr. Meniffee, for which he was instantly called to order by the Speaker and by several members.

“Mr. Meniffee cried out, ‘Let him go on,’ and sat down.

“Mr. Duncan expressed his disregard for what had fallen from such a puppy!

“He was instantly called to order, and Mr. Meniffee proceeded. He said there was a time when such language, coming from the member from Ohio, would have produced a sensation in his bosom; but now, any thing that man could utter, must fall stingless, pointless, harmless, ever since he allowed the insult, which he acknowledged he had received, to pass unredressed; his name, if it ever was on the scroll of honor, was for ever expunged from it.

“The discussion was continued by Messrs. Prentiss, Glascock, Thompson, and Gray.”

Sometimes there is a mingling of “lively” with “severe,” as in the following passage;

“Mr. Halstead was answered by Mr. Bynum, of North Carolina, who is reported to have been very rude, personal, and viperous in his attack upon Mr. Halstead. We have

heard that he intimated the threat of punishment, or personal violence might be resorted to, to curb the opponents of those in power, &c. &c. This attack, we learn, was entirely gratuitous and uncalled for, and made without the shadow of an excuse. But, if Mr. Bynum violated all propriety, what must we say of his compeer and coadjutor, Mr. Boon, who followed this matter up the next day? There is only a brief notice of Mr. Boon's speech taken by the reporters, but this notice sufficiently shows us its character.

"Mr. Boon commented with very great severity on Mr. Halstead's speech of yesterday, and avowed his intention 'to skin' that gentleman. He said his speech evinced the advantage of being high-born and college-bred; characterized its strain of language as low and vulgar, and every way unworthy of a representative; referred to Mr. Halstead's consumption of pens and paper as being ten times greater than his own; he remarked upon his dress as being that of a dandy, &c.; and concluded by comparing the whole speech to butter churned without a cover, which splashed on all around," &c.

We have not selected these accounts as the worst which are to be had, but have taken such as happened to be conveniently at hand. Worse than these, if possible, we suppose, might have been found, because, according to our recollection, these wordy conflicts did not lead, as some others have done, to personal violence. The sad truth is, that what a number of people are ready to praise, that some public men are always too ready to do; and that Congressional orators should so often be foul-mouthed becomes less surprising, when one observes, that, by many of the ten thousand tongues of the newspaper press, they are sure of being applauded for it to the echo. To read some of these criticisms, it might be supposed that the last grace of eloquence was to be deemed wanting, unless the speaker had succeeded in making himself exceedingly offensive. Here is a sample of these precious panegyrics. "Withering sarcasm," with its synonyms, it will be remarked, figures in them as the crowning charm.

"The most withering speech was that made by Mr. Menifee, of Kentucky, who seems in that line to be one of the first men in the House. In sarcasm, wit, brilliancy, scorn, and burning eloquence, he soars far beyond any other member of the present House. He almost approaches the sublimity, beau-

ty, and bitterness of John Randolph, without being exactly of his school."

* * * * *

"In the House to-day, Mr. Brown, from Tennessee, gave the Federal apologists for the New Jersey fraud a thorough settling."

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"We publish, to-day, the powerful remarks of Mr. Wise upon the Seminole war. His indignation, like the fire from the cloud, blasts wherever it falls."

* * * * *

"The excoriation, that Mr. Graves administered the other day to Mr. Pickens, of South Carolina, was dreadful. Several of the Whig members were desirous of trying their hands on Pickens, but, after the speech of Mr. Graves, nothing remained for them to do. The Kentuckian left no *pickins* for anybody that might come after him."

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"Mr. Proffit illustrated this fact by reference to the speech of Duncan, which has been published in the 'Globe,' and recommended to the public, in an article which contains a gross libel on the character of the Western people. Mr. Proffit lashed Duncan with severity, and then passed on to Mr. Hopkins, to whom he also administered a deserved flagellation for his course. It was the best speech I ever heard from him, and greatly interested and entertained the House and a crowded audience."

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"We have a rich treat for our readers. We allude to the speech of Mr. Stanly, of North Carolina, in reply to Mr. Duncan, one half of which we publish to-day, reserving the rest for Monday. We do not remember ever to have witnessed a more skilful or amusing operation, than that performed by the North Carolinian upon the Cincinnati vaporor. He has pricked the bag of wind, and the poor bag is in a collapsed condition."

"Henceforth the whole world will know, (what many knew a long time ago,) that there is no more danger in pulling Dr. Duncan's nose, than in shaking a pump-handle. The annexed comments of the Cincinnati Whig, upon Mr. Stanly's speech, are altogether in point ;

"Such withering sarcasm, such torturing ridicule, such triumphant argument, and such annihilating denunciation, has scarcely been paralleled in the history of Congressional debates. The poor Doctor is literally flayed alive. Had he

been on the rack of a thousand Inquisitions, his torture could not have been more severe.'”

* * * * *

“The tremendous singeing which Peyton gave Glascock and the party yesterday, has been the grand topic of conversation to-day. That Peyton is an eloquent, able, fearless debater, I can promise you. He sits by the side of Wise. They are Cassius-like fellows both. They, and Bell, and the other White men in the House, will torment the party not a little this session, you may depend. They have the talents and the ability to do it.”

* * * * *

“Mr. Peyton continued for some minutes, with great ability, to cut deep and serve up the party, to its great consternation and uneasiness.

“Mr. Glascock, who seems to be like an old lady I have heard of, ‘all talk and no cider,’ now stepped forward to vindicate the party and the ‘venerable President.’ He said he had no respect for any one who could utter such sentiments as the gentleman from Tennessee. He went on for some minutes, praising up the party and the ‘venerable President,’ etc. etc., and then sat down.

“Mr. Peyton now rose, and in a strain of indignant rebuke, keen, cutting, withering eloquence, which has been surpassed upon that floor by no man this session, at least, hurled back in his teeth the insolent declaration of Glascock.”

Here, again, is the sort of exhibition to which our Conscript Fathers are provoked by their admirers. The subject of the following well-meant, but rather equivocal eulogy, in one of the most distinguished gazettes of the country, is the same Mr. Wise. After a description of some of his personal attributes and habits, the delighted writer goes on ;

“It has been well remarked by another describer of the gentleman, ‘that it is fortunate that he is so abstemious, for, were it otherwise, he would be exceedingly dangerous.’ As a debater, he is quick and full of energy, — fire is not more scorching than he is. Woe to the man who falls under his displeasure. He is ferocious in his anger ; but no one sees it in his manner, save a nice observer. All other emotions are expressed in his gestures and his looks ; but his personal rage has no interpreter, save in the firm set mouth, the unflinching and withering eye, and the compact and sullen rigidity of every muscle. His voice is then low, his tone deliberate, and

he is as composed as if he was asking his servant for a drink of water."

Mr. McDuffie, of South Carolina, was the prime favorite of this class of writers, till his retirement from Congress withdrew him somewhat from their admiration. They have no want of opportunity, however, still to "air their vocabulary." The following compliments, which might be multiplied indefinitely, — though they do not relate to speakers on the floor of Congress, show what, in high newspaper quarters, is the *beau idéal* of a politician's genius. They are all from journals of the widest circulation. The first we take up declares, that "Mr. Southard made one of the most able and eloquent political harangues that ever was listened to, and Ogden Hoffman spoke like a young Demosthenes." But commendation like this is too indiscriminating and tame. The others are in the accepted vein.

"Mr. Preston spoke for nearly two hours, with an eloquence and an effect that made the lapse of time unheeded. He described the process by which this young and late vigorous republic had been reduced to a state of premature decrepitude, and, after laying bare the nefarious practices and motives of the Administration, he applied the lash to the villany he had so eloquently exposed, with honest and manly indignation. I will not do this finished orator the injustice of attempting a sketch of his speech. It was alike distinguished for rich imagery, powerful argument, and withering sarcasm. The picture he drew of the pensioned press of the Executive was so faithful, as to make one almost shudder with abhorrence."

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"Mr. Tallmadge's speech is pronounced one of great eloquence and power. He entered upon the various subjects which he discussed, *con amore*, and afforded a rich treat to his hearers. Sometimes he played with the lighter weapons of humor, — sometimes showers of arrows flew from his satirical quiver, — and sometimes he excoriated the Administration with a scorching invective, — and sometimes, again, he grasped and wielded with great power the thunder-bolts of deserved and indignant denunciation. It was a glorious meeting."

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"Mr. Prentice holds one of the most racy pens in America, and wonderfully versatile in its powers. His wit is like the *jet d'eau*, — his taste as exquisite as the tints of the rainbow, — his strength like the Ohio rolling down the Louisville rapids.

At will, his irony gashes like a cleaver, or pierces like a lancet. He can dash in the skull of an opponent with a gnarled maul, or draw his heart's blood with as polished a rapier as ever gleamed. His political jokes snap upon their prey like a steel trap, and, occasionally, their coarse teeth tear rather than cut the flesh ; while his argumentative essays are like the unsheathed broadsword."

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"Colonel Chambers's speech was full of important matter, and enlivened by frequent sallies of real humor. He gave a narrative of the battle of the Thames, which he should be induced to write out for publication. Handling Colonel Johnson as one for whom recent circumstances had given him a feeling allied to contempt, yet as one of whom, on account of his past services, he would wish to speak nothing harsh, he took hold of the great 'petticoat hero,' Senator Allen, and held him up before the searching fire of his sarcasm and rebuke, turning him first this way and then that, basting him now here and now there, as the blisters were seen to rise upon his epidermis, very much as a log-cabin housewife manages a roasting goose, till nearly every one present must have had a feeling of pity for the Ajax of Locofocracy in Ohio."

Such praise, no doubt, — so flattering is the assurance of power and victory, — offers, even to sober men, some temptation to adopt a tone of discussion unbecoming their sense and character. But there are other causes to create and aggravate the evil. In our opinion, one of these is the predominance, in the national councils, of members of the legal profession ; not that the habits of that profession lead directly to ferocity, or to so much as want of courtesy, in debate, but that they tend to place its members, in some respects, in a false position in legislative halls, leading them there to approach each other in an attitude, from which unnecessary mutual provocations are likely to arise. It is a lawyer's business to take his side, and make his preparation to maintain it, out of court ; and when he comes to plead, victory ought to be his object. The true idea of speech-making in a deliberative assembly, on the other hand, is *deliberation*, *consultation*, the *consideration* of a subject by thoughtful and fair minds in order to a comparison of all opinions, a proper modification and conciliation of each, and selection of the best. The robed gentlemen take the proper point of departure, when from the moment of the making up of an issue, Counsellor A, begins to urge the *pro*, and Counsellor B, to

insist upon the *contra*. But legislators do not take the proper point of departure, when, with the first proposal of a measure, they begin to wrangle, — to refuse advice, persuasion, influence, — to repel and exasperate one another. It belongs to the legislator, we repeat it, to go through the wary scrutiny of the judge in choosing his position, before he allows himself to maintain it with a pledged champion's feelings. He should not trust himself to the impulses of the advocate, till first, by attention to the merits of both sides, he has advised himself what, under the present aspects of the case, deserves his support ; a rule which, possibly, professional advocates may find some peculiar difficulty in observing.

We do not forget that the relations of party are such, that the main bearings of some proposed measure are not on ostensible, but on ulterior objects ; that these bearings may be perceived at once ; and that then fidelity to the principles of that party, which has been deliberately embraced, admits no alternative but that of resolute support or opposition. But this is by no means the case with all questions which arise ; nor, as to many others, does it justify that uncompromising spirit of urgency or resistance, to the minutest point of altercation, which the habit of the courts too much encourages. Persuaded, that in the legislative assemblies there would be an improvement in respect to wise counsels, as well as to personal dignity and mutual decorum, if there were less of the forensic antagonism, and more of a readiness to consider, to consult, to adjust, to lead the people to accommodate rather than conquer each other, we cannot be put off from this view by any such assertion as that it is not the view of practical men. On the contrary, we aver, that, on those great public emergencies which make statesmen pause from their passions, and think for country and posterity, discussion, not dispute, reasonable recommendation and inquiry, not violence, become the order of the day, and victory is no longer the first aim, but right, truth, the public safety and honor. So it was in the Congress, that talked over the matter, and concluded that these thirteen Colonies were, “and of right ought to be, Free and Independent States.” So it was in the legislature of Virginia, when Patrick Henry was telling them, “We must fight.” So it was in the late Convention of Massachusetts for revising the Constitution, when

a measure of the first moment, rejected by an overwhelming majority, was, after an exposition of its merits as mild as it was masterly, adopted three days after by a majority almost as large.*

One further remark on this last point, of ill-nature in debate, and we dismiss the subject for the present. It was the one mistake of Washington's public life, that he carried the seat of government into the woods. Legislators are not so situated as to counsel best for the public good, when their isolated position at once affords unrestrained facility for mutual bargains and cabals, and excludes that opportunity of immediate resort to ample sources of information on the various matters of public concern, which is only to be found in the great collected masses of population. But it is not to our present purpose to dilate on these, or other like sinister influences on the national legislation, which may first occur to the reflecting mind, as incident to the seat of government being fixed in that great, out-of-the-way, uncomfortable, country town, — half palace, half sty, — the Federal City. What we have at present to do with, is, the effect upon the manners and temper of our legislators, likely to be produced by the unnatural social position into which they are thrown while exercising their office. To one of the most expensive and, at the same time, most comfortless places on the face of the earth, destitute of the usual attractions of city life to compensate for the absence from home, and of the best means of education for children, — to such a place it cannot be expected that the member of Congress will generally be accompanied by his family. Accordingly, he lives there, — such is the general course of things, — like a college undergraduate, or a soldier in his barracks. Other people, when fretted by the vexations of the out-of-door world, go home at the close of the day to the smiles of a wife, the caresses of children, the society of friends whose different subjects of interest suspend their own, — at any rate, to some different scene, which turns aside the current of their uneasy thoughts; and by the morrow they are tranquil and good-natured again. Not so the envied servant of his country in her sovereign halls of council. From the goadings of his seat in the House, he retires to the noisy loneliness of the public ordinary, or the monotonous sociability of the mess-table, and

* See *Journal of Debates and Proceedings, &c.*, pp. 126, 148.

thence to his solitary chamber, — there, among his cold hillocks of constituents' letters and folded documents, to brood over the annoyances of the day, and get lashed, in dismal vigils, into a bitterer mood for to-morrow's onset. Or, if he goes abroad into society, the society of Washington, composed, to the degree that it is, of foreign and domestic *diplomates*, — of office-holders, office-seekers, and office-givers of every degree, — of many who are conscious, as much as himself, to his vexation and its cause, and who, by one or another kind of suggestion, are likely to irritate his discontent, — may be expected to dismiss him to his couch with a very different kind of preparation for repose, from that of “temperate vapors bland.” And, in short, if he is wise man enough to swallow his bile before he gets another opportunity to vent it on the floor of Congress, he deserves all the more credit for his wisdom, so little is he aided in such self-conquest by any restorative influence of surrounding circumstances.

We know very well, that such revolutions do not go backward, and that the thing is past wishing for; otherwise we could not but devoutly wish that the Congress of the United States were brought together, year by year, in some place more under the influences of American civilization, than Washington, with the small number of its permanent population (however refined the character of this), can ever be. In the centres of civilization, different classes of men feel their responsibility to one another, and a mutually adjusted public opinion restricts the movements and habits of all. It is very bad for any class of men, — all the worse, if it be a distinguished and powerful class, — to become a “law unto themselves”; and a city of government *employés* is as much, or more, an infelicitous anomaly, as would be one of artists or of schoolmasters. Those *conventionalisms* of society, which often may be settled one way or another about equally well, but on the observance of which, — as settled for the time and place, — so much of decorum, and of mutual respect and good understanding depends, are well established and understood in the great communities of men; and every one, who for a time becomes connected with one of those communities, perceives what in that respect he is to consider as his rule. Where, on the other hand, a society is not permanent, but constituted anew from year to year, and that, too, from diverse and discordant elements, — where the starred

and mustachioed representative of some foreign royalty, the plump, saturnine Wall-Street burgher, the nimble-witted and disputatious Yankee attorney, and the back-woods forester, on his first emergence into the glittering world, all muscle, heartiness, and slang, — are brought to play the amiable together in court saloons, it cannot be supposed that any *common law* of manners will be defined for them, further than in its most general principles ; nor can it be matter of much surprise, if, from the painful awkwardness arising from this unacquaintance with each other's habits and tastes, and sense of the *quod honestum decorumque sit*, and from the want of a common standard of the place to conform to, relief should be sought in falling back in some degree into a state of nature, in respect to the forms of intercourse. It may be too reasonably feared, that, in respect to matters of grace and ceremony, a certain degree of *abandon* will come to be indulged ; and certain it is, in fact, that, as one but looks from the galleries of the high places of council, one is amazed to see and hear the postures, the tones, — the manners, in short, — of the same men, whom he may have just now met brilliant ornaments of the select society of the Atlantic cities. Forty miles off, all this would be different ; and, had they been thrown into the polished and intellectual society of Baltimore, or Richmond, or Philadelphia, the insensible, but powerful, influence of those circles, of which they would then have formed but a part, might indirectly have proved as much more beneficial to the country than what they now experience, as it would have directly been more satisfactory and agreeable to themselves. The courtesies of private intercourse, better enforced and appreciated in that different situation, would have tended to keep up a self-respect hostile to any thing like savageness in the conflicts of public life. The concourse of families, which the attractions of such a society would invite, would surround the civil fathers with the natural guardians of their amiable feelings ; it would be scarcely possible, that the whole of the ill blood brought out of a hot debate, should be carried to the encounter of the next day, when there had been an evening of the soothing enjoyment of friendly and elegant social intercourse between. Many a man, immensely intent on nursing his rage, would find, by the morning, that it had been “oozing off” in spite of him, like Bob Acres's courage.

Of course, we do not expect, that the Federal legislation,

in our day, will be conducted in any more suitable place than Washington. But we cannot think it fanciful to estimate highly the influence of humanizing social influences on the minds of those to whom is trusted the vast responsibility of that administration. At any rate, whatever causes may have more or less agency in producing the angry and provoking style of debate, so deplorably common in the national legislature, it is impossible that any considerate patriot should regard the existence of that practice without concern. It is not merely, that discourtesy, coarseness, violence in our high places affects the national character, but that, — unless one will choose to say, that men furiously incensed against each other are as capable of sober, cool, and wise joint action, are as likely to conspire for the common good, as if they were in a placid humor, — it cannot fail materially to affect the course of legislation. In the session of Congress which has begun before these pages will see the light, recent causes of exasperation will have lost something of their force. We cannot but hope to see it conducting the business of the country in a manner more suitable to the dignity of the agents than heretofore, and proportionably, as we view the matter, more auspicious to the public welfare.

- ART. VII. — 1. *Second Annual Report of the Board of Education, together with the Second Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board.* Boston: Dutton & Wentworth. 8vo. pp. 79.
2. *Third Annual Report of the Board of Education, together with the Third Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board.* Boston: Dutton & Wentworth. 8vo. pp. 102.
3. *Abstract of the Massachusetts School Returns for 1838–9.* Boston: Dutton & Wentworth. 8vo. pp. 341.
4. *Abstract of the Massachusetts School Returns for 1839–40.* Boston: Dutton & Wentworth. 8vo. pp. 482.
5. *Lecture on Education.* By HORACE MANN, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. Boston: Marsh, Capen, Lyon, & Webb. 12mo. pp. 62.

THE recent movements in Massachusetts in regard to education are of such importance, and of so general interest,